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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/16/2034  
TAGS: PINR KISL PREL TU  
SUBJECT: (S) REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON ISLAM AND  
POLITICS IN TURKEY (C-RE9-01283)

Classified By: MICHAEL P. OWENS, ACTING DIR., INR/OPS. REASON: 1.4(C).

¶1. (C/NF) WASHINGTON ANALYSTS ARE EXAMINING HOW ISSUES OF PIETY AND ISLAM ARE APPROACHED AND AFFECT POLITICAL AND DAILY LIFE IN TURKEY. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION ON POLITICAL PARTIES' APPROACHES TO ISLAM, ISLAM'S ROLE IN POLITICS, AND PIETY ISSUES IN TURKEY, AS TIME, RESOURCES, AND PRESENT WORKLOAD PERMIT.

¶A. (SBU) POLITICAL PARTIES' APPROACHES TO ISLAM.

1) (SBU) HOW DO PARTIES, INCLUDING THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT PARTY (MHP), DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY PARTY (DTP), AND REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (CHP), EMPLOY OVERTLY ISLAMIC SYMBOLS AND MORES TO APPEAL TO VOTERS? HOW DO THE PARTIES VIEW ISLAM'S ROLE IN PUBLIC LIFE AND IN PRIVATE LIFE?

2) (SBU) HOW HAS THE JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY,S (AKP) CULTIVATION OF PIOUS TURKS CHANGED OVER TIME?

3) (SBU) HOW HAVE AKP LEADERS RELIED ON TOP-DOWN EFFORTS TO MOBILIZE VOTERS, AND TO WHAT EXTENT ARE AKP LEADERS RESPONSIVE TO GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES AND DEMANDS? IN ADDITION TO THE FELICITY PARTY'S (SAADET) PERFORMANCE IN THE MARCH 2009 LOCAL ELECTIONS, WHAT OTHER EVIDENCE SUGGESTS PIOUS MOBILIZATION IN OPPOSITION TO AKP?

¶B. (SBU) POLITICAL ISLAM.

1) (SBU) HOW IS ISLAM CURRENTLY USED TO CHALLENGE TURKEY'S REPUBLICAN STATUS QUO?

2) (SBU) TO WHAT EXTENT IS ISLAM USED AS A BASIS FOR ENGAGING DIFFICULT GEOPOLITICAL QUESTIONS, SUCH AS THE STATUS OF THE KURDS? TO WHAT EXTENT DOES AN ISLAMIC FRAME OF REFERENCE INFLUENCE TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY?

3) (SBU) HOW DOES ISLAM DRIVE TURKISH ENGAGEMENT WITH THE UMMAH MORE GENERALLY, PARTICULARLY OUTSIDE TURKEY?

4) (SBU) WHICH ACTORS LEAD AND DEFINE TURKISH POLITICAL ISLAM? ABDULLAH GUL AND HIS SUPPORTERS? NECMETTIN ERBAKAN AND HIS? DENGIR MIR FIRAT? THE GULENISTS, TURKISH HEZBOLLAH, OR SOME OTHER OUTSIDE FORCE? WHAT IS THE TRAJECTORY OF POLITICAL ISLAM IN TURKEY?

¶C. (SBU) PIETY IN TURKEY.

1) (SBU) HOW ARE PIOUS TURKS ENGAGING IN POLITICS? HOW ARE MECHANISMS LIKE STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS, BROTHERHOODS, URBAN ASSOCIATIONS, OR OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MOVEMENTS USED TO FACILITATE POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT? WHAT OTHER MEANS, IF ANY, EXIST?

2) (SBU) HOW DO DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF ISLAM AFFECT MOBILIZATION OF THE PIOUS?

3) (SBU) WHAT MECHANISMS ARE TURKISH MUSLIM WOMEN USING TO

DEFINE THEMSELVES AS SIMULTANEOUSLY MODERN, FEMINIST, AND OBSERVANT?

4) (SBU) HOW IS ALEVI POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT SIMILAR TO OR DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF OTHER PIOUS COMMUNITIES IN TURKEY? TO WHAT DEGREE IS THIS A RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE VERSUS A CULTURAL ONE?

5) (SBU) WHAT IS THE POLITICAL OUTLOOK FOR THE PIOUS IN TURKEY? HOW ARE TURKS CURRENTLY PERCEIVING TOLERANCE AND INTOLERANCE WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES, WHEN VIEWED IN LIGHT OF INDICATORS SUCH AS PUBLIC STATEMENTS, ACQUIESCENCE IN THE FACE OF INTOLERANCE, ACTS OF VIOLENCE, SOCIAL COERCION, VARIED DEGREES OF PIETY WITHIN FAMILILITIES, AND MIXED NEIGHBORHOODS?

6) (SBU) HOW DO VARIOUS ACTORS USE LANGUAGE, MODES OF DRESS OR FACIAL HAIR, MODESTY, ATTITUDES TOWARD SMOKING, DRINKING ALCOHOL, OR OTHER CUES TO SIGNAL AFFINITIES WITH OR DIFFERENCES FROM PARTICULAR GROUPS OR VIEWS? TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THESE MARKERS SYMBOLIC OR CULTURAL, AND TO WHAT EXTENT DO THEY REFLECT A SPECIFICALLY ISLAMIC POLITICAL AGENDA? AND/OR TO WHAT EXTENT DO THEY PROVIDE A LANGUAGE OR SCHEMA OF OPPOSITION TO THE STRICTURES OF THE KEMALIST STATE?

**¶2.** (U) PLEASE CITE C-RE9-01283 IN THE SUBJECT LINE OF REPORTING IN RESPONSE TO THE ABOVE QUESTIONS.

CLINTON